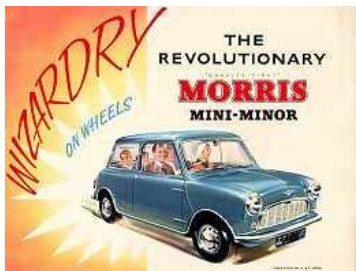


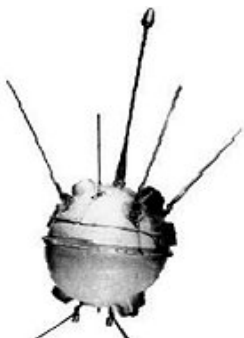



# The Landlady

## Context

### 1959

The story 'The Landlady' was written in, and presumably set in the year 1959, or thereabouts. In 1959, these things were going on.....

Britain		World
<p data-bbox="236 562 592 831">  </p> <p data-bbox="236 837 612 1037"> The 'Mini' was launched and started a revolution in car ownership. The first model cost £350 (about €500). Car ownership reaches 6% of population. </p> <p data-bbox="236 1070 627 1270"> Comedian Benny Hill was already showing 'The Benny Hill Show' which remained on British TV until 1989, when it was removed due to public criticism. </p> <p data-bbox="236 1270 592 1541">  </p> <p data-bbox="236 1541 568 1608"> There were 24 million TV sets in the country. </p> <p data-bbox="236 1641 411 1841"> Elvis Presley and Cliff Richards dominate the UK pop charts </p> <p data-bbox="411 1664 596 1915">  </p>		<p data-bbox="1029 533 1374 600"> Car ownership in the USA equals 20% of population. </p> <p data-bbox="1050 629 1294 965">  </p> <p data-bbox="1029 965 1398 1265"> In 1959 the Russians made history in space three times by sending satellites to the moon for the first time: Lunik 1 passed by the moon, Lunik 2 crash landed on it and Lunik 3 photographed the hidden side of the moon. </p> <p data-bbox="1029 1299 1401 1433"> 'Bonanza' established itself as one of the most popular TV series in the USA. It ran until 1973. </p> <p data-bbox="1029 1433 1305 1632">  </p> <p data-bbox="1029 1632 1401 1700"> It was also the first TV series to be filmed in colour. </p> <p data-bbox="1029 1767 1390 1834"> Singer Buddy Holly is killed in a plane crash in Iowa </p>

Robert's portable radios - the latest in micro technology using the new transistor instead of valves - required a battery weighing one kilogram!



KitKat, the chocolate biscuit, was first manufactured and sold by British company 'Rowntree & Sons'



Average cost of meal in a good restaurant about 5 shillings (€0.40)

**Football League winners:**  
Wolverhampton Wanderers  
**Football Cup winners:**  
Nottingham Forest



'SuperMac' elected to second term of Conservative government

First hovercraft flown

Teenage market for fashion and music worth £830m (€1200m) this year

The 'Vespa' motor scooter, developed in Italy, is all the rage with young people all over Europe



McDonald's, now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year, spreads across the USA from California



**Italian Football League winners:**  
AC Milan  
**Football Cup winners:**  
Juventus



Fidel Castro establishes first socialist government in Cuba after winning revolution against Baptista

Icelandic fishermen involved in 'cod war' with Britain

Film 'Ben Hur' wins 11 Oscars

## Things to do

Without looking back at the text, can you remember:

- 3 items connected with transport?
- 2 items connected with the TV or film industries?
- 2 items connected with teenage fashion or entertainment?
- 1 sports item?
- 1 political item?

The middle column has been left blank. Can you fill in some of the blanks with information about your own country in (or near) 1959? For example, what kind of entertainment did people enjoy most, what products were being manufactured then, what kind of personal transport did people use, and how much did things cost?

How to find this information out? The internet, of course, but don't forget that some people in your family, as well as neighbours, might remember some interesting details that you would never find anywhere else. If you have access to a local library, see if they have a local history section.

Try to collect:

**factual information**

**stories and anecdotes**

**artefacts**

**pictures**

**music**

# Context

## Poisoners

In the story 'The Landlady' we are led to understand that two previous guests of the landlady died while staying at her house. The new guest, Billy Weaver, is offered tea and is told that one of the previous guests drank lots of tea. Billy doesn't like the taste which, he thinks 'tasted faintly of bitter almonds'. Readers of murder stories will recognise that this is the taste usually ascribed to food or drink poisoned with arsenic.

It has been said that poisoning has been carried out more frequently by women than by men, though this is not a proven fact. One of the reasons for this assertion is the traditional higher incidence of women preparing food and drink than men. Whether the truth of the matter, there are many famous women poisoners recorded, especially in the Victorian era, when poisoning seemed to be the favourite choice of murderers. Arsenic was easily obtained in Victorian times in the form of fly-papers. These could be soaked and the arsenic obtained. Ladies of fashion used arsenic for cosmetic purposes as well as killing husbands!

Read about the following poisoners and then answer the questions that follow.

### Murder in Victorian England.



Madeline Smith, a beautiful 21 year old girl, lived in Glasgow in 1897. She had been having a torrid affair with a clerk called Emile L'Angelier, and she had written him some very passionate letters during the course of the affair. Madeline's father pressured Madeline to become engaged to a friend of his, and she therefore tried to get the letters back from L'Angelier. He refused to give them to her and threatened to show them to her fiancé. She then decided to poison him with arsenic in a cup of cocoa! He drank it and died. At her trial Madeline made a very good impression on all present, and the final verdict was Not Proven, a verdict only possible in Scotland.

One of the most celebrated cases was that of Adelaide Bartlett. Adelaide Bartlett's husband Edwin was one who succumbed to poison. In his case, chloroform. Adelaide's trial has gone down in history as one of the most baffling. Although poor Edwin's post-mortem revealed a large amount of liquid chloroform in his stomach, there was no trace in the mouth or throat. The central part of Adelaide's defence at her trial was the mystery of how the chloroform got into the stomach, as it is almost impossible to swallow as the unpleasant taste causes vomiting and if it had been poured down his throat while unconscious, some would have gone into the lungs and there was none found. Adelaide was acquitted at the trial, and afterwards Sir James Paget of St. Bartholomew's Hospital remarked, "Now that it is all over, she should tell us, in the interest of science, how she did it".

Florence Maybrick also decided arsenic would be just the thing for her husband. In 1889 after a short illness, James Maybrick died. The Maybrick family were suspicious, and after locking Florence in her room, they searched the house. They found a packet labelled 'Arsenic. Poison for rats'. The autopsy on Maybrick revealed traces of arsenic in his stomach and Florence was accused of his murder. She was sentenced to death, commuted to life imprisonment. She served 15 years and was released in 1904.



**Mary Ann Cotton**

Christiana Edmunds was an ill-tempered, waspish spinster who fell madly in love with her doctor. She was convinced that Doctor Beard was in love with her and began to send him emotional, passionate letters. Doctor Beard was embarrassed but powerless. In 1871 Christiana decided that Mrs. Beard would have to go, and sent her a box of chocolates. They were full of strychnine. Christiana was eventually caught after the small boy she had deputed to buy the chocolates from the shop identified her. She pleaded insanity at her trial but was sentenced to death. This was later commuted to detention in Broadmoor for life.

Mary Ann Cotton can be called Britain's Mass Murderess. She poisoned four husbands and twice as many children, with arsenic.

She was 20 when she married William Mowbray, a miner, and they had four children. William went to sea as a stoker and died suddenly while at home, as did the four children.

Mary, now a grieving widow, got a job as a nurse in Sunderland Infirmary where she met George Wood. He married her but did not live long. Mary collected the insurance money and met James Robinson, a man with four children. They were married in 1867 and all of his four children died, as well as the new baby that Mary had. Once more Mary collected the insurance and married Frank Cotton. He had two children by his first wife and a new baby by Mary. Frederick died suddenly as did all his children. Mary now had a new lover, a man called Natrass, but he died too of Gastric Fever, according to Mary.

The local doctor, Dr. Kilburn, became suspicious and in 1873 Mary was brought to Durham Assizes. She was found guilty and hanged at Durham Jail.

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<http://www.historic-uk.com/index.shtml>

**AFTER READING the texts, decide which poisoner(s) best fit the sentences given. In some cases, more than one answer is possible, and you should give all possible answers. Write the letter A - F etc that corresponds to poisoner in the appropriate space.**

**A** Adelaide Bartlett  
**B** Madeline Smith  
**C** Florence Maybrick  
**D** Mary Ann Cotton  
**E** Christiana Edmunds

1. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ all used arsenic to poison their victims.
2. Because she was jealous of another person, \_\_\_\_\_ killed her victim.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ weren't convicted of murder.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ killed adults and children.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ might today be called a serial killer.
6. Poisoners \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ used a form of chocolate to disguise the poison.
7. The method \_\_\_\_\_ used to kill her victim was never discovered.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ collected money as a result of the murders.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ was executed after her trial.
10. The family of \_\_\_\_\_ found the evidence which convicted her.

**Dr Pritchard.** Men poisoned women too - it wasn't all one way! Complete this information about Dr Pritchard by choosing the correct verb from the group on the left to fill the gaps. Put the verb into an appropriate form. (Note: 'Antimony' is a poison)

become  
die  
look after  
stand  
watch  
find  
purchase  
hang

Dr. Pritchard in 1864 \_\_\_\_\_ some antimony as his wife was \_\_\_\_\_ in his way - he wanted to marry one of his servant-girls. He had a problem as this servant was pregnant. His wife suddenly \_\_\_\_\_ very ill and his mother-in-law came to \_\_\_\_\_ her. Quite suddenly his mother-in-law \_\_\_\_\_ in his house, and her daughter – Dr Pritchard's wife - a few weeks later. They were both \_\_\_\_\_ to have been poisoned with antimony. Pritchard was \_\_\_\_\_ in 1865, the last man to be executed in public in Scotland. A crowd of 100,000 \_\_\_\_\_ the execution.

# Context

## Witches

Billy Weaver arrives in an unfamiliar town and is looking for somewhere to stay. On the way to a place he was directed to by a man at the station he sees the sign 'Bed and Breakfast' in the window of a house.

He stopped walking. He moved a bit closer. Green curtains (some sort of velvety material) were hanging down on either side of the window. The chrysanthemums looked wonderful beside them. He went right up and peered through the glass into the room, and the first thing he saw was a bright fire burning in the hearth. On the carpet in front of the fire, a pretty little dachshund was curled up asleep with its nose tucked into its belly. The room itself, so far as he could see in the half-darkness, was filled with pleasant furniture. There was a baby-grand piano and a big sofa and several plump armchairs; and in one corner he spotted a large parrot in a cage. Animals were usually a good sign in a place like this, Billy told himself; and all in all, it looked to him as though it would be a pretty decent house to stay in.

In the list below, tick the items you think Billy might have thought made the place '*a pretty decent place to stay*'. Then tick the items that you agree would make a house an attractive place to stay (as a guest).

Item	Billy	You
green curtains		
flowers in the window		
fire burning in the hearth		
carpet		
dog sleeping in front of the fire		
piano		
comfortable sofa and armchairs		
parrot		

In your opinion, what would be missing from the list above? (In other words, what would you be looking for in a guest house if you were thinking of staying there?) Why do you think the items you can think of are not mentioned above?


Billy hadn't quite decided whether or not to enquire at this house, or whether he should carry on to the pub that he had been recommended to stay at.....

And now a queer thing happened to him. He was in the act of stepping back and turning away from the window when all at once his eye was caught and held in the most peculiar manner by the small notice that was there. BED AND BREAKFAST, it said. BED AND BREAKFAST, BED AND BREAKFAST, BED AND BREAKFAST. Each word was like a large black eye staring at him through the glass, holding him, compelling him, forcing him to stay where he was and not to walk away from that house, and the next thing he knew, he was actually moving across from the window to the front door of the house, climbing the steps that led up to it, and reaching for the bell.

In the passage above

1. Which words tell us that Billy is being made to do something?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which actions did Billy carry out as if commanded by an invisible force?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

The feeling that something beyond his control is happening continues when we discover that the landlady seem to have been expecting him, though this might seem impossible.

He pressed the bell. Far away in a back room he heard it ringing, and then at once – it must have been at once because he hadn't even had time to take his finger from the bell-button – the door swung open and a woman was standing there."

"I saw the notice in the window," he said, holding himself back.

"Yes, I know."

"I was wondering about a room."

"It's all ready for you, my dear," she said. She had a round pink face and very gentle blue eyes.

"Thank you," Billy said. "Thank you ever so much." He noticed that the bedspread had been taken off the bed, and that the bedclothes had been neatly turned back on one side, all ready for someone to get in.

"I'm so glad you appeared," she said, looking earnestly into his face. "I was beginning to get worried."

Make a list of the things that seemed to indicate that Billy was expected in the house.

---



---



---

What reasons can you think of for this?

---



---

The fact that he seemed to be expected, and didn't seem able to resist the attraction of the house - feeling himself drawn into it - is a familiar feature of many folk stories, especially those involving children.



**The house of the landlady was just as attractive to Billy as was the gingerbread house to Hansel and**

### **Hansel and Gretel**

*The son and daughter of a poor woodcutter, Hansel and Gretel, found themselves thrown out of their house and alone in the forest.....*

When dawn broke they started wandering around, following any paths looking for a way home, but soon realised they were lost. They walked and walked until suddenly they came upon a strange cottage in the middle of a glade. The cottage was covered in many tasty treats and as the children were so hungry they both began to pull of great strips. "This is chocolate," gasped Hansel as he broke a lump of plaster from the wall. "And this is gingerbread" exclaimed Gretel breaking off part of a windowsill. The children began eating as much as they could, breaking pieces of candy from the cottage. Just then the cottage door swung open and a strange little old woman peered out. "Are you enjoying my cottage?" she said. "Do come in children you have nothing to fear".

The children went inside, feeling lucky to be warm and fed. "You're nothing but skin and bones" said the old woman. "I will have to fatten you up." .....

Hansel and Gretel is a traditional German folk tale

Later, when Billy has unpacked his bags and taken up residence, he congratulates himself on his good fortune:

So a few minutes later, after unpacking his suitcase and washing his hands, he trotted downstairs to the ground floor and entered the living-room. His landlady wasn't there, but the fire was glowing in the hearth, and the little dachshund was still sleeping in front of it. The room was wonderfully warm and cosy. I'm a lucky fellow, he thought, rubbing his hands. This is a bit of all right.

Everything seems set. Billy - and the reader - have been persuaded that the landlady is a pleasant, harmless person and that the house he has found himself in is comfortable and cosy. However, the reader has an advantage over Billy: If everything is as innocent as it seems, why did the author bother to write the story in the first place? As a reader, we know that something is going to happen. Billy, of course, doesn't.

# Context

## Preserving the Body

Billy Weaver is drinking tea with the landlady when he notices something peculiar:

"That parrot," he said at last. "You know something? It had me completely fooled when I first saw it through the window from the street. I could have sworn it was alive."

"Alas, no longer."

"It's most terribly clever the way it's been done," he said. "It doesn't look in the least bit dead. Who did it?"

"I did."

"You did?"

"Of course," she said. "And have you met my little Basil as well?" She nodded towards the dachshund curled up so comfortably in front of the fire. Billy looked at it. And suddenly, he realised that this animal had all the time been just as silent and motionless as the parrot. He put out a hand and touched it gently on the top of its back. The back was hard and cold, and when he pushed the hair to one side with his fingers, he could see the skin underneath, greyish-black and dry and perfectly preserved.

"Good gracious me," he said. "How absolutely fascinating." He turned away from the dog and stared with deep admiration at the little woman beside him on the sofa. "It must be most awfully difficult to do a thing like that."

"Not in the least," she said. "I stuff all my little pets myself when they pass away. Will you have another cup of tea?"

1. What happened to the animals?
2. What did 'she' (the landlady) do with them?
3. What was Billy's reaction when he heard what she had done?
4. How many animals are mentioned?
5. When she says "I stuff all my pets" does the word 'all' equate to the number in the answer to question 4? What is implied?

**There are two ways that the landlady might have preserved her 'pets' after they died. One is known as 'taxidermy' and the other is 'embalming'. Have a look at the two methods, and decide which methods she might have used for all her different 'pets'!**

1 **taxidermy**. *taks'i-dûr-mi*, *n.* The art of preparing, stuffing and mounting skins - *adj.* **taxidermal, taxidermic** - *v.t.* **taxidermise, -ize** - *n.* **taxidermist**

To make sense of the following introduction to taxidermy, you will need to fill the gaps in the text with an appropriate form the word given on the right.

### What is Taxidermy?

Taxidermy is a general term describing the many methods of reproducing a life-like three-dimensional \_\_\_1\_\_\_ of an animal for permanent display. In some cases, the actual skin (including the fur, feathers or scales) of the specimen is preserved and mounted over an artificial armature. In other cases, the specimen is reproduced \_\_\_2\_\_\_ with man-made materials.

The word "taxidermy" is derived from two ancient \_\_\_3\_\_\_ words; *taxis*, meaning movement; and *derma*, meaning skin. Therefore, loosely translated, taxidermy means the movement of skin. This is a fairly appropriate \_\_\_4\_\_\_ as many taxidermy procedures involve removing the natural skin from the specimen, replacing this skin over an artificial body, and adjusting the skin until it appears \_\_\_5\_\_\_.

The modern practice of taxidermy incorporates many crafts, such as carpentry, woodworking, tanning, moulding and casting; but it also requires \_\_\_6\_\_\_ talent, including the art of sculpture, painting and drawing. In a modern deer head mount, for example, the only \_\_\_7\_\_\_ parts of the animal used are the antlers and the skin. All of the other organs and tissues are recreated with man-made materials. The eyes are made from glass, the eyelids are sculpted from clay, the soft tissues of the nose and mouth are sculpted from epoxy or wax, and the mannikin or "form" (which \_\_\_8\_\_\_ the anatomy of each muscle and vein) is made from polyurethane foam.

Today, some taxidermy mounts (most notably saltwater fish) do not contain *any* parts of the animal at all. They are completely \_\_\_9\_\_\_ from man-made materials. This is ideal for catch-and-release anglers, who can release their gamefish \_\_\_10\_\_\_, and can still have a life-sized trophy produced from a good colour photo and measurements. Works of taxidermy are displayed in museums, educational institutions, businesses, restaurants, and homes.

represent

complete

Greece

define

life

art

nature

corporate

create

harm

## Poems for Stuffed Animals

Read this poem by British performance poet John Hegley:

### Relaxing with Taxidermy

When their chihuahua got stuffed  
they were really chuffed,  
no need to feed her  
or walkies on a lead her  
no more poop to scoop  
and doesn't she look smashing on the mantle piece?  
She'll always look at the camera now.  
I don't know why we bothered having her alive at all.

Reprinted by permission of PFD on behalf of: John Hegley ©John Hegman 2001  
<http://www.johnhegley.co.uk/index.htm>

### Why not write a poem about the stuffed parrot in the landlady's front room?!

A favourite name for parrots in Britain is Polly, so perhaps your poem could start:

*See pretty Polly, her feathers so bright*

.....

To find out more, check out this site:  
<http://www.taxidermy.net/default.html>

2

**embalm**, *em-bäm'*, *v.t* to preserve from decay by aromatic drugs, as a dead body. *ns* **embalm'er**; **embalm'ing**; **embalm'ment**

**Read the text, and match the numbers in the text (1-11) with a suitable picture (A-K)**

## Embalming the body

First, his body is taken to the tent known as 'ibu' or the 'place of purification'. There the embalmers wash his body with good-smelling palm wine and rinse it with water from the Nile. (1)

One of the embalmer's men makes a cut in the left side of the body and removes many of the internal organs.(2) It is important to remove these because they are the first part of the body to decompose.

The liver, lungs, stomach and intestines are washed and packed in natron which will dry them out. The heart is not taken out of the body because it is the centre of intelligence and feeling and the man will need it in the afterlife.

A long hook is used to smash the brain (3) and pull it out through the nose.

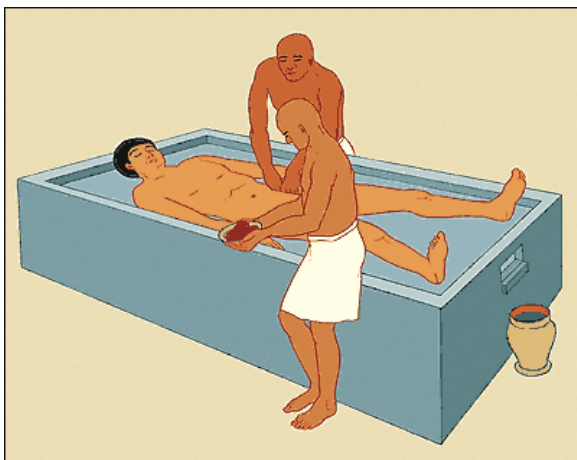
The body is now covered (4) and stuffed with natron which will dry it out. All of the fluids, and rags from the embalming process will be saved and buried along with the body.

After forty days the body is washed again with water from the Nile. Then it is covered with oils to help the skin stay elastic. (5)

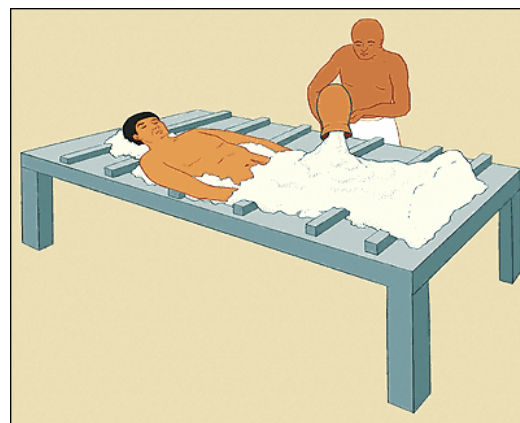
The dehydrated internal organs are wrapped in linen and returned to the body. (6) The body is stuffed with dry materials such as sawdust, leaves and linen so that it looks lifelike.

Finally the body is covered again with good-smelling oils.(7) It is now ready to be wrapped in linen.

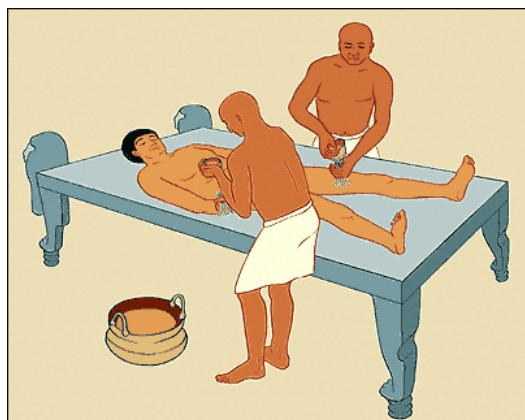
In the past, when the internal organs were removed from a body they were placed in hollow canopic jars. Over many years the embalming practices changed and embalmers began returning internal organs to bodies after the organs had been dried in natron. However, solid wood or stone canopic jars were still buried with the mummy to symbolically protect the internal organs.



**A**



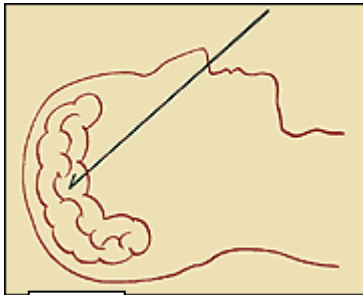
**B**



**C**

**D**





**F**

**E**



**G**



**Who is who? Match the descriptions with the figures**

1. Imsety the human-headed god looks after the liver
2. Hapy the baboon-headed god looks after the lungs
3. Duamutef the jackal-headed god looks after the stomach
4. Qebehsenuef the falcon-headed god looks after the intestines.

**H**



**I**



**J**



**K**



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For much more on the topic of the Ancient Egyptians burial rites go to the British Museum web site:

<http://www.ancientegypt.co.uk/mummies/story/main.html>